

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

After the above amendment, the status of the claims is as follows:

Pending: 1, and 3-7;

Rejected: 1, and 3-7.

Amended Claim 1 corresponds to Claim 2 rewritten in independent form with an additional amendment as discussed with the Examiner during two telephone interviews discussed below.

The Examiner is thanked for the courtesy extended to the undersigned in two telephone interviews dated December 27, 2004 and January 13, 2005. During the first interview the objection to the drawing was discussed. As noted below, the Examiner agreed that there was support in the drawings for the language in Claim 5. In addition, Claim 1 as amended was discussed during both interviews relative to the Saito patent. It is the applicant's understanding that the Examiner now believes that claim 1 as amended is distinguishable from Saito for at least the reasons set out below.

The Examiner objected to the drawings in point 1 of the Office Communication on the basis that the drawings must show the plurality of deformable membranes included in the decoupling valve member as set forth in Claim 5. This objection is traversed.

A plurality of membranes is shown in Figures 2 and 3. These figures show two membranes, both with reference number 19. Therefore this objection is not well founded and should be withdrawn.

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Claims 1-4 have been rejected as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) by Saito. This rejection is traversed.

Claim 1 now presented for examination is not anticipated by Saito. Contrary to the examiner's position there is no disclosure of a deformable valve member clamped between the grids except for the deformable membrane portion.

Indeed the valve member disclosed in Saito is a movable plate 56 that clearly moves as an entire unit between the upper grid 50 and the lower grid 51 and does not have "the decoupling valve membrane, excepting the membrane portion," clamped between the grids. There is no clamping of any portion of the decoupler in Saito. The element cited by the examiner as the deformable membrane 22 is not between the grids. Therefore Claims 1, 3, and 4 are not anticipated by Saito and this rejection should be withdrawn.

The examiner has rejected claims 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Saito. This rejection is traversed.


None of the features in claims 5-7 is disclosed or even suggested by Saito. Therefore this rejection is not proper and should be withdrawn.

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In light of the foregoing, the prompt issuance of notice of allowance is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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